



### HOW PARCEL POST RATES ARE FIXED

Charges Are Regulated Under the Zone System.

**DIG ENTERPRISE LAUNCHED**

Eleven Pounds Is the Limit in Weight for a Single Package—Anything That Will Not Injure Other Mail Can Be Sent.

By EDWARD B. CLARK.

With the coming of the New Year the United States government will enter into a new field of enterprise—the transmittal of merchandise by what is known as the parcel post. For years there has been a demand for a system of inexpensive transmittal of packages. The camps of favor and disfavor of the parcel post scheme have been about equally divided. Finally at the last session of congress a bill was passed which will put the plan into operation, but only it must be said in little more than an experimental way.

It is the intention of Uncle Sam to move rather slowly in the parcel post matter. He wants to find how popular it will be, how much it will cost the government, and whether there is to be a profit or loss at the end of each year. If it is found that the plan is successful from the point of view of the people, which means the government also, the parcel post will be extended until finally it reaches the proportions which its proponents say they believe it is destined to assume.

**Zone System Explained.**

It is no exaggeration to say that thousands upon thousands of inquiries have been made of the postmaster general as to just what the parcel post will mean to the people. It was a law of congress establishing the plan which made provision for a division of the country into zones into 35,000 units which are to be as centers in describing the circles which mark the boundaries of the zones. There has been no clear understanding, apparently, of this zone system, but really it is a very simple matter.

The accompanying map shows the country divided into zones from the center in which Washington is situated, as the center. Accompanying map is a table showing the rate of postage per pound for parcels from Washington to places within all the units.

Each unit contains an area thirty square miles. Now each unit is a circle from which the zones are drawn, and so every unit in the country is like the one which is reproduced except that the zone lines will be shown with the unit of his postoffice as a center. All that a postmaster will have to do when a parcel is presented for transportation is to find out in what zone the destination of the package lies. His table will show him instantly the rate per pound from

the unit in which his postoffice lies to the zone of the package's destination, the price as has been explained before, to every postoffice in any one zone being the same. The parcel post will take nothing but fourth-class matter. Printed matter is still in the third-class designation. Therefore books cannot be sent by the parcel post system. This the postoffice authorities seem to think is in a way unjust and may work a hardship. It may be that in the future the law will be changed so as to include all printed matter. It seems to be certain that an attempt will be made to bring about this change as speedily as possible.

Postmaster General Hitchcock has ordered that postmasters be advised that parcel post packages cannot be accepted for mailing unless they bear a distinctive parcel post stamp and have attached to them the return card of the sender. A series of distinctive stamps is now in course of preparation for this class of mail as required by the law creating the parcel post system. Consignments of these stamps will be ready for shipment to all postoffices in ample time for the establishment of the new system on New Year's day.

The postoffice department has given instruction to every postmaster in the country to enlighten his patrons as much as possible on the general subject of the parcel post and especially on the use of the special stamps and the necessary attachment of the return card. The law requires that all fourth-class matter mailed after January 1, 1913, without parcel post stamps attached shall be treated as "held for postage" matter. Parcel post packages will be mailable only at postoffices, branch postoffices, lettered and local named stations, and such numbered stations as may be designated by the postmasters.

**Rate on Seeds Not Affected.**

It should be said that the act of congress which puts a parcel post plan into operation does not in any way affect the postage rate on seeds, cuttings, bulbs, roots, scions and plants as fixed by section 482 of the postal laws and regulations.

The classification of articles mailable as well as the weight limit, the rates of postage, zone or zones and other conditions of mailability under the act of congress, if the postmaster general shall find on experience "that they or any of them are such as to prevent the shipment of articles desirable, or shall permanently render the cost of the service greater than the receipts of the revenue therefrom, he is hereby authorized, subject to the consent of the interstate commerce commission after investigation, to reform from time to time such classification, weight limit, rates, zone or zones or conditions, in order to promote the service to the public or to insure the receipt of revenue from such service adequate to pay the cost thereof."

Through many years different members of the house and senate have been interested in promoting parcel post legislation. Among the men most active in securing the legislation which soon is to go into effect as law are Senator Jonathan Bourne of Oregon, Representatives David J. Lewis of Maryland and William Sulzer of New York, who has just been elected governor of that state.

### APPROVES RULES FOR PARCEL POST

Postmaster General Issues Regulations Governing System.

**WHAT MAY BE SENT BY MAIL**

Give American People Opportunity to Send Farm and Factory Products by Mail From and to Any Point in United States.

Postmaster General Hitchcock has just approved the regulations which cover in detail the articles which may or may not be sent by parcel post. These regulations are now being turned off at the government printing office on a "rush order" and they will be distributed as rapidly as possible.

The rules as to what can be sent and what cannot be sent and the instructions for the preparation of mailable articles with other "official advice" are given here as they have just been prepared by the postoffice department in Washington.

The minimum rate will be five cents for the first pound and three cents for each additional pound to any point not exceeding fifty miles from the office of mailing; the local rate, which is five cents for the first pound and one cent for additional pound, applies to all parcels the delivery of which does not involve their transportation on railway lines. The rates increase for each successive one of the eight zones, the maximum rate being twelve cents a pound, which will carry a parcel across the continent or to any of our possessions. Parcels will be limited to eleven pounds in weight and six feet in length and girth combined.

**Mailable Perishable Articles.**

Butter, lard and perishable articles such as fish, fresh meats, dressed fowl, vegetables, fruits, berries and articles of a similar nature that decay quickly, when so packed or wrapped as to prevent damage to other mail matter, will be accepted for local delivery either at the office of mailing or on any rural route starting therefrom. When inclosed in an inner cover of metal, heavy corrugated pasteboard or other suitable material and wrapped so that nothing can escape from the package, they will be accepted for mailing to any office within the first zone or within a radius of 50 miles. Butter, lard, or any greasy or oily substance intended for delivery at offices beyond the first zone must be suitably packed. Vegetables and fruit that do not decay quickly will be accepted for mailing to any zone if packed so as to prevent damage to other mail matter. Eggs will be accepted for local delivery when securely packed in a basket or other container. Eggs will be accepted for mailing regardless of distance when each egg is wrapped separately and packed in a container.

There is no restriction on salted, dried, smoked or cured meats and other meat products, but fresh meat in any form will be transported only within the first zone.

Parcels containing perishable articles must be marked "PERISHABLE," and articles likely to spoil within the time reasonably required for transportation and delivery will not be accepted for mailing.

**Manufactured Articles.**

Manufacturers or dealers intending to transmit articles in considerable quantities are asked to submit to the postmaster for approval a specimen parcel showing the manner of packing.

When sharp pointed instruments are offered for mailing, the points must be capped or encased. Blades must be bound so that they will remain attached to each other or within their handles or sockets.

In Powders, pepper, snuff, or other similar powders not explosive, or any similar pulverized dry substance, not poisonous, may be sent when inclosed in cases made of metal, wood or other material to render impossible the escape of any of the contents. Flour of all kinds must be put up in such manner as to prevent the package breaking or the flour being scattered in the mails.

**Queen Bees and Nursery Stock.**

Queen bees, live insects, and dried

reptiles may be mailed in accordance with the regulations that now apply to other classes of mail.

Seeds of fruit, nursery stock, and all other plant products for preparation may be mailed under the same conditions.

**Confectionery and Soap.**

Candies, confectionery, yeast cakes, soap in hard cakes, etc., must be inclosed in boxes and so wrapped as to prevent injury to other mail matter.

Sealed original packages of proprietary articles, such as soaps, tobacco, pills, tablets, etc., put up in fixed quantities by the manufacturer, and not in themselves unmarketable, will be accepted for mailing when properly wrapped.

**Millinery.**

Fragile articles, such as millinery, toys, musical instruments, etc., and articles consisting wholly or in part of glass, or contained in glass, must be securely packed and the parcel stamped or labeled "FRAGILE."

**Unmarketable Matter.**

The following matter is declared unmarketable by law:

Matter manifestly obscene, lewd, or lascivious; articles intended for preventing conception; articles intended for indecent or immoral purposes; all matter otherwise marketable by law, the outside cover or wrapper of which bears and delineation or language of a libelous, scurrilous, defamatory, or threatening character. All such matter, when deposited in a post office or found in the mails, shall be withdrawn and sent to the divisions of dead letters.

**Intoxicants, Poisons and Inflammable Materials.**

Spirituous, vinous, malted, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors of any kind; poisons of every kind, and articles and compositions containing poison, poisonous animals, insects and reptiles; explosives of every kind; inflammable materials (which are held to include matches, kerosene oil, gasoline, naphtha, benzine, turpentine, denatured alcohol, etc.), infernal machines, and mechanical, chemical or other devices or compositions which may ignite or explode; disease germs or stabs, and other natural or artificial articles, compositions or materials of whatever kind which may kill, or in any wise injure another or damage the mail or other property.

**Pistols, Animals and Birds.**

Pistols or revolvers, whether in detached parts or otherwise; live or dead (and not stuffed) animals, birds, or poultry, except as elsewhere provided; raw hides or pelts, guano, or any article having a bad odor will not be admitted to the mails.

**Treatment of Undeliverable Parcels.**

Perishable matter will be delivered as promptly as possible, but if such matter cannot be delivered and becomes offensive and injurious to health, postmasters may destroy it, or the injurious or offensive portion thereof.

**Parcels Improperly Packed.**

Postmasters will refuse to receive for mailing parcels not properly inclosed or packed for safe shipment.

When parcels on which the postage is wholly unpaid or insufficiently prepaid is deposited for local delivery and the sender is unknown, notice of detention need not be sent but such matter will be delivered and the deficient postage collected from the addressee by the carrier. If the addressee refuses to pay the postage the matter will be sent to the Division of Dead Letters.

**Insurance on Parcels.**

A mailable parcel on which the postage is fully prepaid may be insured against loss in an amount equivalent to its actual value, but not to exceed \$50, on payment of a fee of ten cents in parcel post stamps, such stamps to be affixed.

**Forwarding of Parcels.**

Parcels may be remailed or forwarded on the payment of additional postage at the rate which would be chargeable if they were originally mailed at the forwarding office, in which case the necessary stamps will be affixed by the forwarding postmaster. Payment must be made every time the parcel is forwarded.

**Preparation for Mailing.**

Parcels must be prepared for mailing in such manner that the contents can be easily examined. A parcel will not be accepted for mailing unless it bears the name and address of the sender preceded by the word "From."

In addition to the name and address of the sender, which is required, it will be permissible to write or print on the covering of a parcel, or on a tag or label attached to it, the occupation of the sender, and to indicate in a small space by means of marks, letters, numbers, names or other brief description, the character of the parcel, but ample space must be left on the address side for the full address in legible characters and for the necessary postage stamps. Descriptions such as "Merry Christmas," "Please do not open until Christmas," "Happy New Year," "With best wishes," and the like, may be placed on the covering of the parcel in such manner as not to interfere with the address.

**Distinctive Stamps.**

The law requires that the postage on all matter must be prepaid by distinctive parcel post stamps affixed. Postmasters cannot receive for mailing parcels that do not bear such stamps.

Parcel post stamps are not valid for the payment of postage on matter of the first, second, and third classes, and when used for that purpose, the matter to which they are affixed shall be treated as "held for postage."

**Maps and Guides.**

Parcel post maps, with accompanying guides, are to be sold to the public at their cost, 75 cents, through the chief clerk of the post office department. In ordering maps care should be taken to specify the post office from which the postage rates are to be determined.

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It will be seen by reference to the table of rates of postage that it will cost more per pound to send a package a long distance than it does to send it a short distance. The rate increases for a package weighing one pound at the rate of one cent for each zone. No package weighing more than 11 pounds can be sent under the new parcel post law. It should be said right here that on the long hauls the parcel post may not be able to compete with the express companies, but that on shorter hauls it can so compete. It was the expressed desire of the legislators and of the postoffice officials that the parcel post system should be made of particular use to persons having farm and factory products to transmit to customers. It is probable that producers must study the rates of postage and the convenience of transmittal and compare them with the cost and convenience under present methods before individually a man can determine whether he is to profit or not by the change. Then there is another thing to be considered and which only can be known definitely when fuller regulations have been made to specify exactly what kind of things can be sent by parcel post. It can be said in a general way that anything can be sent which is properly wrapped and which will not injure other mail matter with which it may come in contact.

**Copy Foreign Countries.**

It is probable that the government will adopt a means of transportation for certain kinds of its merchandise much like those which have been adopted in parcel post countries abroad. What the English call hampers, basket-like arrangements, probably will be adopted, and as these can be kept separate from the ordinary mail matter it is believed that the regulations as finally adopted will allow the sending of eggs, butter, dressed poultry, live poultry, honey, fruit, cuttings, bulbs, roots, scions and plants and other products of the country.

The 11-pound limit for a single package may work at first against any very extended use of the parcel post for some of the articles, which have been named. Of course, more weight can be sent if it is sent in different parcels, but the cost in that case would be heavier because the increase per pound on a single package is not great up to 11 pounds, and probably it would increase at no greater rate if the government were to raise the limit of weight which is now fixed. To make it simpler, it will cost more to send two packages of 11 pounds than it would to send one package of 22 pounds if the government eventually should allow a heavier single package to be carried and should charge in proportion just what it does now for one package of 11 pounds weight.

Every postmaster in the United States will have a parcel post map like the one which is here reproduced except that the zone lines will be shown with the unit of his postoffice as a center. All that a postmaster will have to do when a parcel is presented for transportation is to find out in what zone the destination of the package lies. His table will show him instantly the rate per pound from

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The law requires that the postage on all matter must be prepaid by distinctive parcel post stamps affixed. Postmasters cannot receive for mailing parcels that do not bear such stamps.

Parcel post stamps are not valid for the payment of postage on matter of the first, second, and third classes, and when used for that purpose, the matter to which they are affixed shall be treated as "held for postage."

**Maps and Guides.**

Parcel post maps, with accompanying guides, are to be sold to the public at their cost, 75 cents, through the chief clerk of the post office department. In ordering maps care should be taken to specify the post office from which the postage rates are to be determined.

zone. The rates therefore are fixed from the unit in which the postoffice is located, but they are the same from that office to any point in any one zone.

It will be seen by reference to the table of rates of postage that it will cost more per pound to send a package a long distance than it does to send it a short distance. The rate increases for a package weighing one pound at the rate of one cent for each zone. No package weighing more than 11 pounds can be sent under the new parcel post law. It should be said right here that on the long hauls the parcel post may not be able to compete with the express companies, but that on shorter hauls it can so compete. It was the expressed desire of the legislators and of the postoffice officials that the parcel post system should be made of particular use to persons having farm and factory products to transmit to customers. It is probable that producers must study the rates of postage and the convenience of transmittal and compare them with the cost and convenience under present methods before individually a man can determine whether he is to profit or not by the change. Then there is another thing to be considered and which only can be known definitely when fuller regulations have been made to specify exactly what kind of things can be sent by parcel post. It can be said in a general way that anything can be sent which is properly wrapped and which will not injure other mail matter with which it may come in contact.

**Copy Foreign Countries.**

It is probable that the government will adopt a means of transportation for certain kinds of its merchandise much like those which have been adopted in parcel post countries abroad. What the English call hampers, basket-like arrangements, probably will be adopted, and as these can be kept separate from the ordinary mail matter it is believed that the regulations as finally adopted will allow the sending of eggs, butter, dressed poultry, live poultry, honey, fruit, cuttings, bulbs, roots, scions and plants and other products of the country.

The 11-pound limit for a single package may work at first against any very extended use of the parcel post for some of the articles, which have been named. Of course, more weight can be sent if it is sent in different parcels, but the cost in that case would be heavier because the increase per pound on a single package is not great up to 11 pounds, and probably it would increase at no greater rate if the government were to raise the limit of weight which is now fixed. To make it simpler, it will cost more to send two packages of 11 pounds than it would to send one package of 22 pounds if the government eventually should allow a heavier single package to be carried and should charge in proportion just what it does now for one package of 11 pounds weight.

Every postmaster in the United States will have a parcel post map like the one which is here reproduced except that the zone lines will be shown with the unit of his postoffice as a center. All that a postmaster will have to do when a parcel is presented for transportation is to find out in what zone the destination of the package lies. His table will show him instantly the rate per pound from

the unit in which his postoffice lies to the zone of the package's destination, the price as has been explained before, to every postoffice in any one zone being the same. The parcel post will take nothing but fourth-class matter. Printed matter is still in the third-class designation. Therefore books cannot be sent by the parcel post system. This the postoffice authorities seem to think is in a way unjust and may work a hardship. It may be that in the future the law will be changed so as to include all printed matter. It seems to be certain that an attempt will be made to bring about this change as speedily as possible.

Postmaster General Hitchcock has ordered that postmasters be advised that parcel post packages cannot be accepted for mailing unless they bear a distinctive parcel post stamp and have attached to them the return card of the sender. A series of distinctive stamps is now in course of preparation for this class of mail as required by the law creating the parcel post system. Consignments of these stamps will be ready for shipment to all postoffices in ample time for the establishment of the new system on New Year's day.

The postoffice department has given instruction to every postmaster in the country to enlighten his patrons as much as possible on the general subject of the parcel post and especially on the use of the special stamps and the necessary attachment of the return card. The law requires that all fourth-class matter mailed after January 1, 1913, without parcel post stamps attached shall be treated as "held for postage" matter. Parcel post packages will be mailable only at postoffices, branch postoffices, lettered and local named stations, and such numbered stations as may be designated by the postmasters.

**Rate on Seeds Not Affected.**

It should be said that the act of congress which puts a parcel post plan into operation does not in any way affect the postage rate on seeds, cuttings, bulbs, roots, scions and plants as fixed by section 482 of the postal laws and regulations.

The classification of articles mailable as well as the weight limit, the rates of postage, zone or zones and other conditions of mailability under the act of congress, if the postmaster general shall find on experience "that they or any of them are such as to prevent the shipment of articles desirable, or shall permanently render the cost of the service greater than the receipts of the revenue therefrom, he is hereby authorized, subject to the consent of the interstate commerce commission after investigation, to reform from time to time such classification, weight limit, rates, zone or zones or conditions, in order to promote the service to the public or to insure the receipt of revenue from such service adequate to pay the cost thereof."

Through many years different members of the house and senate have been interested in promoting parcel post legislation. Among the men most active in securing the legislation which soon is to go into effect as law are Senator Jonathan Bourne of Oregon, Representatives David J. Lewis of Maryland and William Sulzer of New York, who has just been elected governor of that state.

reptiles may be mailed in accordance with the regulations that now apply to other classes of mail.

Seeds of fruit, nursery stock, and all other plant products for preparation may be mailed under the same conditions.

**Confectionery and Soap.**

Candies, confectionery, yeast cakes, soap in hard cakes, etc., must be inclosed in boxes and so wrapped as to prevent injury to other mail matter.

Sealed original packages of proprietary articles, such as soaps, tobacco, pills, tablets, etc., put up in fixed quantities by the manufacturer, and not in themselves unmarketable, will be accepted for mailing when properly wrapped.

**Millinery.**

Fragile articles, such as millinery, toys, musical instruments, etc., and articles consisting wholly or in part of glass, or contained in glass, must be securely packed and the parcel stamped or labeled "FRAGILE."

**Unmarketable Matter.**

The following matter is declared unmarketable by law:

Matter manifestly obscene, lewd, or lascivious; articles intended for preventing conception; articles intended for indecent or immoral purposes; all matter otherwise marketable by law, the outside cover or wrapper of which bears and delineation or language of a libelous, scurrilous, defamatory, or threatening character. All such matter, when deposited in a post office or found in the mails, shall be withdrawn and sent to the divisions of dead letters.

**Intoxicants, Poisons and Inflammable Materials.**

Spirituous, vinous, malted, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors of any kind; poisons of every kind, and articles and compositions containing poison, poisonous animals, insects and reptiles; explosives of every kind; inflammable materials (which are held to include matches, kerosene oil, gasoline, naphtha, benzine, turpentine, denatured alcohol, etc.), infernal machines, and mechanical, chemical or other devices or compositions which may ignite or explode; disease germs or stabs, and other natural or artificial articles, compositions or materials of whatever kind which may kill, or in any wise injure another or damage the mail or other property.

**Pistols, Animals and Birds.**

Pistols or revolvers, whether in detached parts or otherwise; live or dead (and not stuffed) animals, birds, or poultry, except as elsewhere provided; raw hides or pelts, guano, or any article having a bad odor will not be admitted to the mails.

**Treatment of Undeliverable Parcels.**

Perishable matter will be delivered as promptly as possible, but if such matter cannot be delivered and becomes offensive and injurious to health, postmasters may destroy it, or the injurious or offensive portion thereof.

**Parcels Improperly Packed.**

Postmasters will refuse to receive for mailing parcels not properly inclosed or packed for safe shipment.

When parcels on which the postage is wholly unpaid or insufficiently prepaid is deposited for local delivery and the sender is unknown, notice of detention need not be sent but such matter will be delivered and the deficient postage collected from the addressee by the carrier. If the addressee refuses to pay the postage the matter will be sent to the Division of Dead Letters.

**Insurance on Parcels.**

A mailable parcel on which the postage is fully prepaid may be insured against loss in an amount equivalent to its actual value, but not to exceed \$50, on payment of a fee of ten cents in parcel post stamps, such stamps to be affixed.

**Forwarding of Parcels.**

Parcels may be remailed or forwarded on the payment of additional postage at the rate which would be chargeable if they were originally mailed at the forwarding office, in which case the necessary stamps will be affixed by the forwarding postmaster. Payment must be made every time the parcel is forwarded.

**Preparation for Mailing.**

Parcels must be prepared for mailing in such manner that the contents can be easily examined. A parcel will not be accepted for mailing unless it bears the name and address of the sender preceded by the word "From."

In addition to the name and address of the sender, which is required, it will be permissible to write or print on the covering of a parcel, or on a tag or label attached to it, the occupation of the sender, and to indicate in a small space by means of marks, letters, numbers, names or other brief description, the character of the parcel, but ample space must be left on the address side for the full address in legible characters and for the necessary postage stamps. Descriptions such as "Merry Christmas," "Please do not open until Christmas," "Happy New Year," "With best wishes," and the like, may be placed on the covering of the parcel in such manner as not to interfere with the address.

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